

# Travel trends: Why family travel is once again on the rise

Accommodation providers have begun to embrace the change that can be seen when it comes to family travel. Hoteliers who have made the move away from four- and five-star luxury towards more budget-friendly options suitable in particular for larger family groups travelling together are reaping the rewards.



It has become clear that understanding what families expect from their holidays are starting to turn the travel industry on its head, particularly as multigenerational travel emerges as this year's top vacation trend, according to a survey conducted by leading global travel network, Virtuoso. Above all else, for those marketing the industry, this means catering successfully and collectively for the varying tastes and expectations to be found among cross-generational travellers.

According to Velma Corcoran, Airbnb country manager, South Africa, accommodation disruptors are ideally aimed at travellers for whom other accommodation options have simply become too costly, as well as for those who wish to immerse themselves more fully into a destination "lifestyle", as traveller priorities and expectations move in this direction.



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With particular regard to family travel, Corcoran notes: "Many Airbnb hosts, for example, offer entire homes, ideal for families who would never be able to travel together without these more affordable accommodation options."

In actual fact, exclusive home rentals have been identified as one of the top travel trends for 2019 by Conde Nast Traveller, with family members and groups of friends clubbing together to rent homes away from home.

**There is also the challenge of catering to different expectations in terms of family dynamics.**

For instance, grandparents are increasingly travelling with their extended families. They're the baby boomers who are now all grown up, in their sixties and seventies and are the "empty-nesters" who want to spend quality time with all their offspring.



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Judiet Barnes 6 Dec 2018



Heading for (or already being in) retirement means value for money has become extremely important in their travel decisions. But while budgets count, they still expect a level of comfort, style and great travel memories in terms of where they rest their heads, eat their breakfasts and see the sights while on vacation.

## Meanwhile, on the other end of the scale, their Generation Z grandchildren want immersive experiences and Instagrammable moments.

Ranging anywhere from pre-teens to those in their early 20s, members of this generation are now being called the "destination disruptors" and are calling the shots on family holidays; again according to Virtuoso, they hold the most influence over their families' travel decisions.

Travel destinations that incorporate things such as "voluntourism" (volunteering holidays that benefit local communities), nomadic journeys spent discovering familial roots, or culturally immersive experiences that take them out of their everyday lives and into those of other cultures are high on the Gen Z list.

Combining these different expectations across the generations is resulting in a paradigm shift away from traditional travel choices, as extended families look for both the most pocket-friendly solutions and innovative attractions to suit and satisfy the entire brood.



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Chelsey Hale 10 Dec 2018



"Peer reviews play a massive role in ensuring that the accommodation presented is exactly what you need and that you are not surprised when you check in. Therefore, the comfort that older travellers expect and seek is easily part and parcel of the deal as they are able to see upfront what they are letting themselves in for," says Corcoran, "while the 'immersive' encounters on offer by many of our Experiences hosts, for example, cater to the demands of younger travellers."

## **Experiences can include anything and everything from outdoor adventures to culinary explorations.**

Outdoor adventures and, in particular, coastal towns that offer these, are rising high in popularity stakes.

Among the most popular destinations for South African families so far in 2019, as revealed in research conducted over the recent Easter weekend, are Margate, Durban and Balitoville in KwaZulu-Natal which respectively took first, second and fourth place. With the Western Cape accounting for six of the top ten destinations - including Saldanha Bay in third place - all of the coastal destinations listed in the research experienced phenomenal year-on-year growth over previous years.

"Through the rise of family travel, South Africans are really starting to embrace and discover their own country, but on their terms. And this means within the budgets they have available. It's an exciting new market and the local industry needs to step up to and meet the demands," concludes Corcoran.

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